Under the National Wind Resource Assessment Programme, 18 sites with a potential of about 850 MW have so far been identified. Projects aggregating to about 360 MW have been allotted to developers/investors in the private sector by the State Government so far.

UN Conference on Rural Housing

*393. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMER:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Indian proposal for raising resources for improving the standards of rural housing was adopted at a United Nations conference on housing held at Istanbul in mid-June, 1996;

(b) if so, what was the precise Indian proposal and with what modifications the same was adopted; and

(c) the steps contemplated by Government for improving rural housing in the country in the light of the said proposal adopted at the UN conference of rural housing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) and (b) No specific proposal for raising resources for improving the standards of rural housing was made by the Indian delegation in the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat-II) held at Istanbul during June 3—14, 1996.

However, the Indian delegation had actively intervened on the issues relating to balanced development of settlements in rural areas which was instrumental in arriving at certain common agreed formulations in the two final documents, viz. the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda, which emerged after the Conference. Relevant paragraphs of these documents are annexed in the statement (see below)

(c) Housing being a state subject, the primary responsibility for formulation and execution of housing programmes rests with the state Governments. However, Central Government supplements the efforts of the state Governments by implementing a rural housing scheme, viz., Indira Awas Yojana. The core strategy for rural housing enunciated in the National Housing Policy is:

— Support to varying needs of shelter including new construction, additions and upgradation;

— providing assistance by way of dissemination of appropriate technology and delivery system for promoting self-help housing.

— assuring land and tenure rights by enactment of enabling laws for conferment of homestead rights.

— prevention of alienation of homestead on tribal land.

In tune with the recommendations of the Chief Ministers Conference held on the 4th and 5th July, 1996 in New Delhi on basic Minimum Services, an Action Plan has been drawn up to provide houses to all rural shelterless poor by the year 2000 AD. The implementation of the Action Plan will depend on the resources available in the Ninth Five Year Plan.

Statement

EXTRACTS FROM ISTANBUL DECLARATION CIRCULATED IN THE CONFERENCE ON 14.6.96.

"Rural and urban development are interdependent. In addition to improving the urban habitate, we must also work to extend adequate infrastructure, public services and employment opportunities to rural areas in order to enhance their attractiveness, develop an integrated network of settlements and minimise rural to urban migration. Medium and small sized towns need special focus."

2. EXTRACTS FROM ADVANCE AND UNEDITED VERSION OF THE HABITAT AGENDA DATED 3rd JULY, 1996.

10. Balanced development of settlements in rural regions.

160. Urban and rural areas are interdependent economically, socially and environmentally. At the turn of the century, a substantial proportion of the World's population will continue to live in rural settlements, particularly in developing countries. In order to achieve a more sustainable future for the Earth, these rural settlements need to be valued and supported. Insufficient infrastructure and services, lack of environmentally sound technology, and pollution resulting from the adverse impacts of unsustainable industrialization and urbanization contribute significantly to the degradation of the rural environment. Additionally, the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas increases rural-to-urban migration and results in a loss of human capacity in rural communities. Policies and programmes for the sustainable development of rural areas that integrate rural regions into the national economy require strong local and national institutions for the planning and management of human settlements that place an emphasis on rural urban linkages and treat villages and cities as two ends of a human settlements continuum.

161. In many countries, rural populations, including indigenous people, play an important role in ensuring food security and in sustaining the social and ecological balance over large tracts of land and thus contribute significantly to the task of protecting biodiversity and fragile ecosystems and to the sustainable use of biological resources.

ACTIONS

162. To promote the sustainable development of rural settlements and to reduce rural-to-urban migration, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, should:

(a) Promote active participation of all interested parties, including those in isolated and remote communities, in ensuring the integrated consideration of the environmental, social and economic objectives of rural development efforts;

(b) Take appropriate measures to improve the living and working conditions in regional urban centres, small towns and rural service centres;

(c) Foster a sustainable and diversified agricultural system in order to have vibrant rural communities;

(d) Provide infrastructure, services and incentives for investment in rural areas;

(e) Promote education and training in rural areas to facilitate employment and the use of appropriate technology;

163. To promote the utilization of new and improved technologies and appropriate traditional practices in rural settlements development, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, in coperation with the private sector, should:

(a) Improve access to information on agricultural production, marketing and pricing in rural and remote areas by using, inter-alia, advanced and accessible communication technologies;

(b) In cooperation with farmers' organizations, women's groups and other interested parties, promote research and the dissemination of research findings in traditional, new and improved technologies for, inter-alia, agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and agro-forestry.

164. In establishing policies for sustainable regional development and management, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, should:

(a) Promote education and training programmes and establish procedures for the full participation

of rural and indigenous people in the setting of priorities for balanced and ecologically viable regional development;

(b) Make full use of geographic information systems and environmental assessment methods for the preparation of environmentally sound regional development policies;

(c) Implement regional and rural development plans and programmes based on needs and economic viability;

(d) Establish an efficient and transparent system for the allocation of resources to rural areas based on people's needs.

165. To strengthen sustainable development and employment opportunities in impoverished rural areas, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, should:

(a) Stimulate rural development by enhancing employment opportunities, providing educational and health facilities and services, improving housing, strengthening technical infrastructure and encouraging rural enterprises and sustainable agriculture;

(b) Establish priorities for regional infrastructure investments based on opportunities for economic return, social equity and environmental quality;

(c) Encourage the private sector to develop and strengthen contract-based wholesale markets and marketing intermediaries for rural products so as to improve and/or establish a cash flow and future contract economy in rural areas;

(d) promote equitable and efficient access to markets as well as, where appropriate, pricing and payment systems for rural products, specially of food items consumed in urban areas;

goods, services and capital between urban and rural areas;

(c) Promote broad cooperation among local communities to find integrated solutions for land-use transport and environmental problems in an urban-rural context;

(d) Pursue a participatory approach to balanced and mutually supportive urban-rural development, based on a continuous dialogue among the interested parties involved in urban-rural development.

(e) promote products from rural areas in urban markets and rural service centres by improving access to market information and distribution centres and networks;

(f) reduce significantly or eliminate environmentally harmfull subsidies and other programmes, such as those that stimulate the excessive use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, and price control or subsidy system that perpetuate sustainable practices and production systems in rural and agricultural economies.

166. An integrated approach is required to promote balanced and mutually supportive urban-rural development. To achieve this objective, Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, with the support of the relevant international and regional institutions, should:

(a) Provide an appropriate legal, fiscal and organizational framework that is suitable for strengthening the networks of small and medium-sized settlements in rural areas;

(b) Facilitate the development of an efficient communication and distribution infrastructure for the exchange of information, labour,